



April 15, 2020

OPI School Nutrition Programs COVID-19 Guidance and Clarification

The federal USDA regulations have changed rapidly in response to COVID-19, leading to some confusion in the field. The OPI will continue to work with communities to find the most inclusive and beneficial program to meet local needs while still following federal requirements. We appreciate your flexibility and dedication to continuing to feed children in your communities!

Summer Food Service Program

- To operate the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), schools can be a sponsor themselves, or a site within an existing sponsor. Schools must sign up to run the program with OPI to claim meals for reimbursement. At open summer sites, any child 18 years or younger can receive a free meal. Complete meal claims in the SFSP section of [MAPS](#). Contact Kim Lloyd, SFSP Manager, at Kimberly.lloyd@mt.gov with questions.
- On April 1, 2020 the USDA approved OPI's area eligibility waiver, enabling SFSP sponsors to operate open sites in areas approved by OPI based on economic hardship, but that are not located in areas in which poor economic conditions exist per federal regulations. Sponsors can apply for the waiver [here](#).

Waivers

- The USDA has approved 11 COVID-19-related waivers that impact School Nutrition Programs, including area eligibility, non-congregate feeding, meal pattern flexibility, onsite monitoring, and meal pick-up. Refer to the [OPI COVID-19](#) page for a full description of waivers, and apply for applicable waivers [here](#). Contact your regional [School Nutrition Specialist](#) with questions.

National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program

- If providing distance education services, schools in communities not experiencing economic hardship (not approved for an area eligibility waiver) or schools choosing to not operate the SFSP during school closures can continue operating the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs.
- The district must send an e-mail to their [School Nutrition Specialist](#) certifying they are providing educational services during the school facility closure. Continue claiming meals according to student benefit status in the School Nutrition Programs section of [MAPS](#).

Meal Distribution Options

- There is flexibility at the local level on how to distribute meals to children. Sponsors [must notify OPI](#) of which methods they are utilizing. Some allowable meal service distribution options include:
 - a. Bus Routes
 - b. Home Delivery – Schools must first obtain written consent from households.
 - c. Grab and Go Meal Pick Up
 - d. Providing Meals for Multiple Days – OPI must [approve](#) if providing meals for multiple days.
- OPI has [guidance](#) available on the OPI COVID-19 [webpage](#) for safely delivering and preparing school meals and educational materials.